

## BOOK REVIEWS

**PROGRESS IN GYNECOLOGY, Volume II.** Edited by Joe V. Meigs, M.D., Clinical Professor of Gynecology, Harvard Medical School; Chief of Staff of the Vincent Memorial Hospital, the Gynecological Service of the Massachusetts General Hospital; and Somers H. Sturgis, M.D., Clinical Associate in Gynecology, Harvard Medical School; Assistant Surgeon, Massachusetts. Grune & Stratton, New York, 1950. \$9.50.

The second volume of "Progress in Gynecology" recently has come off the press, and, as the title indicates, we would expect it to be replete with new and useful information on all that has transpired in gynecology since the issuance of its predecessor in 1946. But alas, the few years that have gone over the hill have left us preciously little that could be considered new in concept or technique in the practice of gynecology, for as in all other branches of medicine, progress in gynecology comes in fits and spurts followed by long stretches of profound barrenness. A large portion of the new volume is not much different from the old one, albeit the editors state that much of the subject matter has been rewritten and that new chapters have been added. Yet the elaboration of old chapters and the unavoidable duplication resulting from having several authors treat the same subject has not particularly enhanced the value of the original intent to add to our current knowledge. And, although the second volume parades 250 pages more than its predecessor the reviewer does not find that the extra amount of print necessarily indicates progress but rather the more thorough re-boiling of old bones. Taking a long view at the sincere intent of the editors to edify their readers one must conclude that the new book is not so much a second volume as an enlarged second edition.

Your reviewer has no quarrel with the content of the book. Its quality is good, although some chapters could have been treated with greater discretion regarding the relative value of certain diagnostic and therapeutic matters, for the book is meant to serve as a graduate text. Originally the "Progress in Gynecology" was meant to take the place of a "refresher" for those whose long absence with the military had disrupted their contact with gynecology; and its sale, and the willingness of the publishers to turn out a second volume, indicate that the book served its purpose at the time. That need has changed. As graduate information the "Progress" covers a wide range of information, largely of the standard type, and as a collection of personal views of 75 or more contributors it presents a fair cross-section of the thinking of Eastern gynecologists and some foreigners. If the title is not taken too literally, "Progress in Gynecology" makes good reading.

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**THE ANTIHISTAMINES, Their Clinical Application.** By Samuel M. Feinberg, M.D., Associate Professor of Medicine, Saul Malkiel, Ph.D., M.D., Assistant Professor of Medicine, and Alan R. Feinberg, M.D. The Year Book Publishers, Inc., Chicago, 1950. \$4.00.

This book provides a good comprehensive review of the antihistamines. It is concise and, for the busy practitioner, quite adequate. The authors, who are well suited to writing such a book, have covered the entire field of the antihistamines from their early conception to their growth as a \$100,000,000 industry. One criticism which may be offered is that the section devoted to the history of the drugs is too brief for such an interesting topic.

In this book, the antihistaminics have very usefully been divided into three categories according to their parent struc-

ture. By following such a guide the practitioner can easily determine which particular drug to use in a given patient where a previously used antihistaminic has been found ineffective.

A very difficult problem has been attempted by the authors, namely, to list the various antihistaminic drugs in order of their effectiveness. Such an evaluation is very difficult, as the authors correctly point out, because among other reasons it depends upon which property of the antihistamine the particular investigator is attempting to measure, since it is definitely known that these drugs possess several properties apart from their histamine-inhibiting effect.

The authors have attempted, after much research, to condense into this small book most of the literature on the antihistaminics and to indicate our present day knowledge of them. This is by no means a reference book, nor is it intended to be, but it is ideally suited for the busy doctor who wants to acquaint himself with this large and relatively new subject. Numerous articles have been reviewed and a most extensive bibliography is included. Since the antihistamines are or have been employed in practically every branch of medicine, the authors have attempted to cover each specialty separately and to discuss briefly the merits of these drugs in the particular specialty.

The book is quite complete, consisting of a brief description of histamine, the chemistry and pharmacology of the antihistaminics, their clinical aspects and the toxic effects which may occur and which should be looked for following their administration. There is also included a handy table listing the various antihistaminics on the market and the dosage of each commonly employed.

All in all, it is well arranged, easy to read, concise, yet containing a great deal of information. This book is recommended to make us more aware not only of the indications but especially the limitations of the antihistamines.

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**THE MASK OF SANITY—An Attempt to Clarify Some Issues About the So-Called Psychopathic Personality.** By Hervey Cleckley, M.D., Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology, University of Georgia School of Medicine, Augusta, Georgia, Second Edition. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1950. \$6.50.

This is a greatly enlarged second edition, much of which has been rewritten. The subtitle of the book, "An attempt to clarify some issues about the so-called psychopathic personality," describes the material given. The book starts out with a discussion of the problem of sanity and some discussion of the use of the term "psychopathic personality." There then follow nearly 200 pages of descriptions of actual clinical cases. Another 80 pages are devoted to comparing and differentiating the psychopathic personality from other abnormal mental conditions. About 40 pages are spent in a description as to what are the essential features in psychopathic personality. Following this, about 150 pages are devoted in an attempt to state what is wrong with these patients, what has brought about this condition, and what can be done about it. Views of other persons as well as of the authors are well presented, and there are 226 references.

Anyone who wishes to study the problem of the psychopath should read this book. It contains much valuable information, is presented in an interesting fashion, and is an important contribution to this whole problem.